

NEWS ADVISORY

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Relief for Utah home owners
Program helps with home repairs

Salt Lake City, Utah – Cash-strapped seniors can finally get help financing those overdue home repairs.

Utah's decades-old Rural Single Family Rehabilitation & Reconstruction Program has gone statewide, and is now available in Utah, Summit and Wasatch counties. Previously, the program was limited to five regions of the state, or 26 counties.

"Help is now available to all income-eligible home owners, and it couldn't come at a better time," said Gordon D. Walker, Director of the state Division of Housing and Community Development. "Even the most basic repairs can seem like a luxury in today's financial market. People are struggling and the credit crunch has made it difficult for some to obtain loans."

The Rehabilitation & Reconstruction program is a lender of last resort, and works with home owners who have been turned down by the banks or who don't qualify for reasonable rates.

Fixed-income seniors may apply to borrow any amount of money at low interest rates; loan amounts are limited only by the scope of the project and a household's ability to repay the money. Some may qualify for deferred-payment loans, not payable until the home is sold or refinanced.

Eligible home improvements include the replacement of roofs, windows and doors, and the repair of electrical problems and water damage. Also eligible are wheelchair ramps, railings and other upgrades designed to make homes more accessible to people with disabilities.

"Some people are reluctant to apply because they think they earn too much to qualify, or they've been labeled a credit risk," said Lisa Yoder, the program manager. "But we encourage all interested home owners to inquire. Those who don't qualify for our program may be eligible for other programs."

Investing now in much-needed repairs preserves a home's value and can extend its life-span by 15 to 20 years, said Yoder.

To apply, or get more information, call 1-877-488-3233 or visit www.housing.utah.gov

Fact Sheet

Utah's Rural Single Family Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program

The Single Family Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Program (SFRRP) gives grants and low-interest loans to income-eligible home owners to help finance critical home repairs and upgrades.

Eligible Repairs

Eligible repairs tend to be those that, if neglected, pose a potential health and safety threat. Typical projects:

- Replacement of unsafe stairways, roofs, broken windows, doors and water-damaged walls or flooring
- Removal or correction of faulty electrical systems, mold and lead-based paint
- Installation of wheelchair ramps, railings and other upgrades to make a home more accessible for people with disabilities.

How It Works

The Utah Division of Housing and Community Development contracts with local governments and community-based housing counseling agencies to handle applications and financing.

The household identifies its own licensed and certified contractors to carry out the work, subject to state approval. Some repairs are financed through grants, but most are done in the form of low-interest amortizing loans or deferred loans (not payable until the home is sold or refinanced).

Applications are generally processed on a "first-come, first-served" basis.

Applicants must:

- Own and live in their homes as their primary residence
- Be current on all Utah and federal taxes
- Be unable to obtain private bank financing for the needed repairs from a reputable lender at a reasonable rate
- Have an acceptable credit report

Who Qualifies

The average SFRRP home is a two-person household earning below 50 percent of Area Median Income - that's \$24,000 annually in Utah County.

- Nearly half are occupied by seniors
- 39 percent are occupied by a person with a disability
- 29 percent contain at least one child